



A92 MURCAR NORTH ACTIVE TRAVEL INFRASTRUCTURE



Background - The Story So Far

Transport Scotland and Aberdeen City Council (ACC) have a Service Level Agreement to deliver a number of environmental mitigation projects to offset the environmental impact of the Aberdeen Western Peripheral Route (AWPR).



Delivery of an active travel route between Blackdog and Murcar Roundabout is one of the projects covered by the agreement to improve conditions for people walking, wheeling and cycling.

An active travel route has been in the planning as part of AWPR mitigation measures, with the scheme included as a project within the Aberdeen Active Travel Action Plan.

Previously, initial design work undertaken by ACC recommended a 3m shared use path on the east side of the A92. This was consulted on, with strong support for the scheme demonstrated.

Since this initial design work, there have been a number of changes that have taken place meaning that further work is required, including:

- Publication of updated Cycling by Design guidance
- Progression of the Ellon to Garthdee Transport Corridor Study
- Significant progress with land use developments at Blackdog, Shielhill and Cloverhill
- Shared use path development south of Balmedie, with aspirations to complete the route to Blackdog

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Current Study - June 2023 to Present

In June 2023, AECOM was commissioned by ACC to develop, appraise and identify options for the provision of active travel infrastructure between Blackdog and Murcar following the principles of Scottish Transport Appraisal Guidance (STAG). This is following the three stage process set out below.

1. REVIEW OF PREVIOUS WORK

- To understand the key constraints previously identified
- To understand connections with existing and proposed active travel infrastructure to the north and south
- To reach agreement on design widths to be used for the active travel route

2. INITIAL APPRAISAL: CASE FOR CHANGE

- Identifying Problems & Opportunities to understand the case for the active travel route
- To develop Transport Planning Objectives which express the change sought in the study area
- Identification and development of options for the active travel route

3. STAG-BASED APPRAISAL / OPTION DESIGN

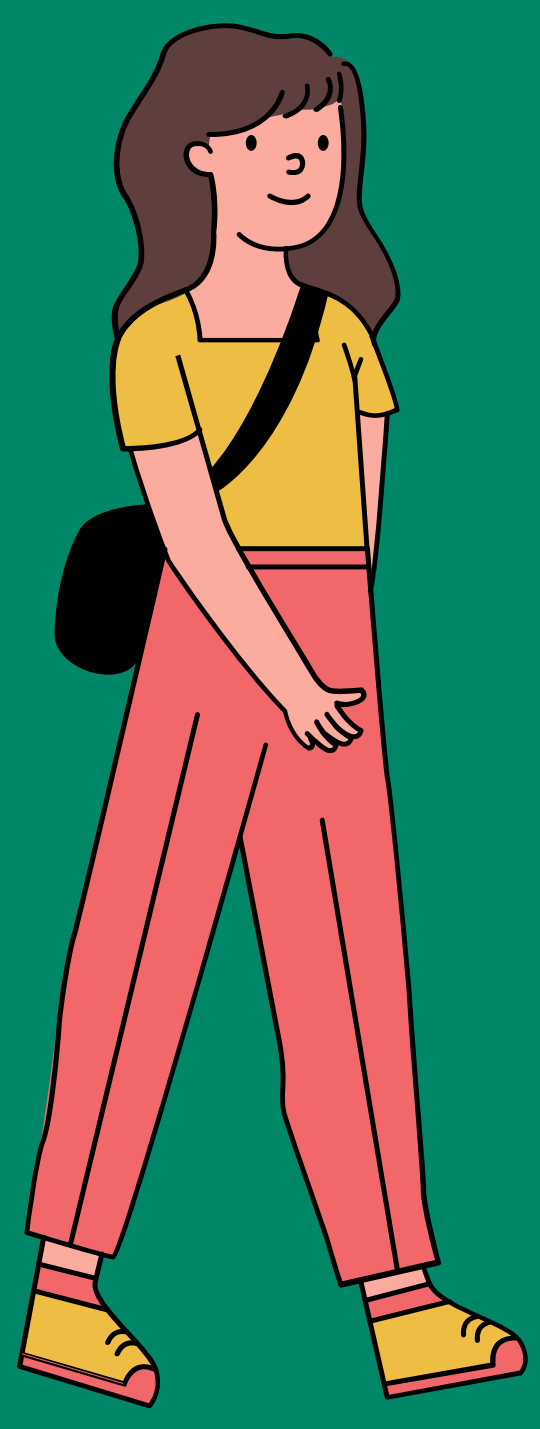
STAG Appraisal

Assessing the performance of options against:

- Transport Planning Objective
- STAG Criteria
- Equalities Assessments
- Policy Objectives
- Cost to Government
- Risk and Uncertainty

Option Design

- Development of Designs
- Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats considered for each option
- More detailed design of preferred option in preparation for construction



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Optioneering

Three options were developed considering alignments on the east, west and through redistribution of space on the existing A92 carriageway. Connections to existing infrastructure and desire lines were also considered.

WEST

Following A92 on west side between Murcar and Blackdog Junction utilising Tarbothill Farm Cottages Road



CENTRAL

Redistribution of carriageway space - connection to Blackdog via Blackdog Junction or at Hareburn Road dependent on lane reallocation choice



EAST

Following A92 on east side and utilising old road with land required to the rear of properties - connection to existing infrastructure at Hareburn Road





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Outcomes of STAG-Based Appraisal

The objective of the study is:

By 2030, increase the level of walking by 10% and cycling five-fold from 2027 for all journey types on the Blackdog to Murcar corridor.

OBJECTIVE APPRAISAL

- All options would support an increase in the level of walking and cycling for all journey types but the east option would be expected to generate the biggest increase
- The central option would require users to travel alongside fast moving vehicles. Whilst appropriate segregation and a buffer would require to be in place, this may still be off-putting for less confident users
- The west option would require users to cross the A92 to access residential areas in the east. Whilst users could do so at Blackdog Junction, that is not on the desire line for users accessing the southern part of Blackdog
- Whilst the east option would require users to cross the A92 to integrate with the existing shared use path infrastructure at Murcar Roundabout, there is a dedicated crossing point in this location to allow users to do so

Option	Score
West	+2 (Moderate positive impact)
Central	+2 (Moderate positive impact)
East	+3 (Major positive impact)



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Outcomes of STAG-Based Appraisal

The results of the appraisal against the STAG Criteria are shown below.

STAG CRITERIA APPRAISAL

- **Environment:** Concerns associated with the impact on biodiversity and habitats for the east and west options and associated with the impacts of congestion for the central option
- **Climate Change:** The central option could increase congestion if the carriageway is narrowed, leading to queuing and increased greenhouse gas emissions
- **Health, Safety & Wellbeing:** Benefits with all options due to provision of a dedicated active travel facility. Some safety concerns with the west option associated with crossing the A92 and with the central option due to the relative proximity to vehicles on the A92
- **Economy:** The central option would be expected to have an adverse impact on journey times for general traffic associated with congestion
- **Equality & Accessibility:** Benefits with all options due to improved active travel network coverage. East option performs strongest as the majority of the study area population is located to the east of the A92

Option	West	Central	East
Environment	-1	-1	-1
Climate Change	0	-1	0
Health, Safety & Wellbeing	+1	+1	+2
Economy	0	-1	0
Equality & Accessibility	+1	+1	+2

KEY	
+3	Major positive impact
+2	Moderate positive impact
+1	Minor positive impact
0	Neutral
-1	Minor negative impact
-2	Moderate negative impact
-3	Major negative impact



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Outcomes of STAG-Based Appraisal

The results of the appraisal against the Deliverability Criteria are shown below.

DELIVERABILITY APPRAISAL

- **Feasibility:** Potential risks with west and east options due to a need for third party land and due to significant level difference for the west option at Murcar and at Blackdog. Risks with central option due to the need to reconfigure the carriageway
- **Affordability:** Higher capital costs for east and west options due to the need for third party land, earthworks and risks to existing utilities. For the east option, the use of the old road, the existing road network at Blackdog and the existing active travel path from Hareburn Terrace to Blackdog Junction may mitigate the capital investment required
- **Public acceptability:** To be confirmed through the consultation process. West and east options likely to be supported as they would provide a dedicated active travel facility away from the A92. There are likely to be some public acceptability concerns with the central option associated with removal of a lane for general traffic



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Recommendations

ALIGNMENT

Based on the appraisal process, the Eastern Alignment has been identified as the preferred option for the following reasons:

- Provides improvements to the existing infrastructure
- Provides direct and coherent active travel connection between Murcar and Blackdog
- Supports active travel links for new housing developments at Cloverhill and Blackdog
- Builds on work previously completed

SHARED OR SEGREGATED

Shared use facilities have been identified as the preferred option for the active travel link for the following reasons:

- Provides a space suitable for all users walking, wheeling and cycling
- Provides a facility suitable for the expected number of users
- Ensures consistency in the active travel network for wider connections
- Lower overall cost (capital and maintenance) in comparison to kerb segregated facilities
- Provides greater scope to adapt in future should user demands change



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Next Steps of the Process

Completed Work

- Review of context
- Review of updated Cycling by Design Guidance
- Review of previous work
- Identification of problems and opportunities
- Objective setting
- Generation of options

Current Work

- Option appraisal
- Preparation of designs

Next Steps

- Further design work
- Delivery of scheme

For further information about the project, please email the AECOM Project Team at:

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